

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. **(Currently amended)** A composite footwear insole comprising a front portion for interacting with the user's foot at the metatarsal region and at least partly at the plantar arch, and a rear portion for interacting with the foot over the heel region, said rear portion having at least one layer of gel material whose plan size is substantially equal to that of said rear portion and being smaller than the plan size of the entire insole to uniformly support the heel and absorb stresses acting thereon, said gel ~~layer~~ material having an upper surface for interacting with the heel that has no discontinuities to further increase comfort, wherein said gel ~~layer~~ material is made of one piece and is connected to the front portion by a substantially continuous connecting junction, and said upper surface is configured to be in direct contact with the user's heel. ~~visible from the outside.~~

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Previously presented) Insole as claimed in claim 1, wherein said rear portion is wholly made of gel material.

4. (Previously presented) Insole as claimed in claim 1, wherein said rear portion comprises a support base made of a semi-rigid, natural or synthetic material, underlying said gel layer.

5. (Previously presented) Insole as claimed in claim 1, wherein said gel layer is finished at least on said upper surface with a varnish which is capable of reducing tackiness between said rear portion and the heel.

6. (Previously presented) Insole as claimed in claim 1, wherein said gel layer has a raised peripheral edge to conform to the heel anatomy and favor retention thereof.

7. (Previously presented) Insole as claimed in claim 1, wherein said front portion comprises at least one layer of transpiring material.

8. **(Currently amended)** Insole as claimed in claim 4, wherein said semi-rigid support base ~~continuously extends even at~~ across said front portion.

9. (Previously presented) Insole as claimed in claim 8, wherein said front portion comprises at least one layer of transpiring material, and said support base extends under said transpiring layer at said front portion.

10. **(Cancelled)**

11. (Previously presented) Insole as claimed in claim 1, wherein said rear portion has a one-piece appendage extending toward the plantar arch of the foot.

12. (Previously presented) Insole as claimed in claim 1, wherein said front portion comprises a gel insert placed at the metatarsal region.

13. **(Currently amended)** A method of manufacturing a footwear insole comprising the steps of forming a front portion designed to interact with the foot at the metatarsal region and partly at the plantar arch, forming a rear portion, integral with the front portion, and designed to interact with the heel, forming a gel layer, and molding it in a ~~special~~ mold, substantially over the whole plan size of said rear portion and less than the plan size of the entire insole, ~~wherein said rear portion is made of one piece and is made to have said upper surface visible from the outside.~~ wherein said gel layer is co-molded with said front portion and a semi-rigid support base.

14. **(Cancelled)**

15. (Previously presented) Method as claimed in claim 13, said gel layer is co-molded with said front portion and a semi-rigid support base.

16. (Previously presented) Method as claimed in claim 13, the front portion and the rear portion are fabricated separately and are later joined by a substantially continuous connecting junction.

17. (Previously presented) Method as claimed in claim 13, wherein said gel layer is coated at an upper surface thereof with a varnish which is capable of reducing its tackiness to the heel.

18. (Previously presented) Method as claimed in claim 13, wherein a non-stick varnish is previously applied on said mold for coating an upper surface of the gel layer to reduce its tackiness to the heel.

19. **(New)** The method of claim 13, wherein said semi-rigid support base is provided under the gel layer and extends across the rear portion.

20. **(New)** A method of manufacturing a footwear insole comprising the steps of:

forming a front portion configured to interact with the foot at the metatarsal region and partly at the plantar arch;

forming a rear portion, integral with the front portion, wherein said rear portion is made of one

piece and is configured to interact with the heel; and

forming a gel layer, and molding it in a mold, substantially over the whole plan size of said

rear portion and less than the plan size of the entire insole, wherein the front portion and the rear portion are fabricated separately and are subsequently joined by a substantially continuous connecting junction.